

Cold Shoulder by botanicapoetica

Series: [Dustin is Smart \[4\]](#)

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Summary:

Dustin sees Steve and Billy fight for the first time. He's surprised by his own reaction.

Cold Shoulder

Author's Note:

Ugh I think my new favorite thing is writing these little snippets!

As always: enjoy, and your opinions are highly appreciated!

Dustin had seen Billy and Steve fight before. That time had been different, seemed like a world away compared to the way things were between everyone now. Billy really felt like one of them now, letting them explain the intricate rules of D&D at Eleven's house today with nothing but patience on his face. That was a vast improvement from the completely baffled dog-like face Steve would usually pull. Steve hadn't pulled any kind of face today. He was pissed off about something, which had made their carpool there extremely awkward. Dustin felt like he was watching parents fight, watching Steve sit shrewdly in the passenger seat without a sound and Billy driving, his hands white knuckling the steering wheel. They'd all piled into the house and pretended like everything was fine for the first hour or two, but Steve seemed like he was finally done. Dustin watched him stand up from his spot in the corner to stalk over to where Billy's jacket was hanging, yanking his cigarettes out of his pocket and storming out of the house. What had crawled up Steve's ass anyway? Everyone shared similar looks of confusion. Well, everyone except Billy.

"It's fine, twerps. Just keep playing, you can catch me up." Billy said as he stood up, walking out the door so quickly he didn't even bother grabbing his jacket.

They all took the advice and continued to play, even if they could hear raised voices outside. Dustin felt like it really said something that no one, not even Max, was worried about those sounds when Billy was involved anymore. Something nice and warm. After a few minutes though, Dustin saw that El had a weird look on her face. She was obviously listening in with her sick superpowers, but she didn't seem very happy about it. "Bad." was all she said and they were all

heading outside, Eleven grabbing Billy's jacket on the way for some reason beyond Dustin's understanding. They all walked around the corner and again Dustin felt like he was watching some parents fighting, but the angry party in this fight wasn't the one he was expecting. Steve was gesticulating wildly, yelling something about seeing Billy slap someone's ass at school, but Billy wasn't having any of it, his eyebrows drawing together in disbelief.

"-be fucking kidding me, Harrington! You know it's for show. You *know* that. You *know* why."

"Bullshit, Billy. I saw that shit, that was all Billy "Shit Eating Grin" Hargrove. What's wrong with you?!"

Dustin realized that Steve was getting closer and closer to Billy each time, pointing his finger at Billy. Even Dustin knew this probably wasn't the smartest choice, but Steve seemed too angry to care. Everyone standing around him seemed to be frozen, afraid to interrupt in case Billy lashed out. It didn't happen very often now, but poking a bear usually only has one result.

"You don't give a shit about anybody but yourself. I don't know why you have to act like such a complete asshole at school, Billy. Can you just not stand people actually liking you for once?" Steve spat out, but his face fell before the words had even come out, his hand dropping limply to his side. All Dustin could think was yeah, no shit, stupid. Dustin felt Eleven brush past him, placing herself in between Billy and Steve, her best crazy super mutant angry face on.

"Walk. Away." she said flatly, and Dustin was smart but he couldn't figure out why she seemed so angry about-

Oh.

Dustin's eyes landed on Billy and he was...crying? Billy Hargrove was standing flat against the side of the house, his lower lip trembling and his eyes filled with tears. Their eyes met for a moment and Billy seemed to realize fully that everyone was there, his jaw going tight before he looked the opposite way. Dustin watched his fists clench and shake, but he didn't feel afraid. He felt mad. He followed Steve back into the house, sparing a glance backwards to watch Eleven slip

Billy's coat on his shoulders and reach to hold his hand, and heard the door shut behind him. Dustin looked back at the party and saw that yeah, they were all definitely going to be chicken shits here.

"Steve, that was a real dick thing to do. That wasn't cool at all." Dustin said, and steamrolled through Steve's defensive scoff before he could butt in. Dustin was smart, clearly smarter than Steve, and would have to spell shit out for him. "We don't do low blows to members of the party, and when we do, we have to apologize. Look, I don't know what happened, but we all know what would happen if Max and Billy's dad thought Billy was anything *but* some kind of macho dickhead. We all get you're mad, but Steve, we don't do low blows. You need to go back out there and say you're sorry."

Dustin watched Steve rub at his forehead, a big sigh leaving him. He didn't put up any fight, just nodded and, upon seeing everyone in the room giving him the same look, threw his hands up. "Alright! Alright! I'm going, guys. Jesus, get those abandoned puppy looks off your faces." he said, but Dustin didn't miss the way Steve gave him an appreciative clap on the shoulder on his way out. They all stood for a moment, listening for more fighting maybe, but just heard a few small thumps against the side of the house. They were all shaken out of their spying by Eleven opening and then shutting the door behind her, a big smile on her face. "Good now. Really good now." was all she said, and gagging noises filled the room.

"I SAID APOLOGIZE, NOT KISS AND MAKE UP!" Dustin bellowed, but he had a feeling that even if they heard him, they were electing to ignore him completely.

Author's Note:

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